



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

October 4, 2022

The Honorable Nydia Velázquez
2302 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Velázquez:

Thank you for writing to express your concerns about water pollution and habitat destruction from ongoing construction near Cueva de las Golondrinas in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. My heart goes out to the people in Aguadilla and across Puerto Rico as they recover from Hurricane Fiona. While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is focused on our work under the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help Puerto Rico recover from the severe impacts of Hurricane Fiona, we are also continuing our commitment to ensure compliance with environmental law, particularly in overburdened and underserved communities. EPA is actively monitoring the situation at Cueva de las Golondrinas in Aguadilla and we agree that there is documented non-compliance related to construction activities in the area.

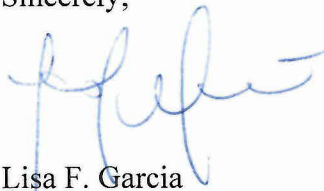
As you noted in your letter, on June 27, 2022, EPA issued an administrative compliance order using our authorities under the Clean Water Act against The Cliff Corp., the project owner, and Grupo Caribe, LLC, the general contractor. Our order requires these companies to, among other things, implement site-specific erosion and sediment controls and stabilization measures to address storm water runoff discharges containing sediments from being discharged into the Atlantic Ocean from the Cliff Villas Hotel and Country Club construction site to protect terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

In response, the companies sent an amended Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan which I have enclosed with this letter. They also submitted an amended Plan of Action and information on the actions taken to comply with the order and the requirements of the 2022 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Discharges from Construction Activities. EPA is now reviewing the documents submitted to verify compliance with the order and the 2022 general permit and determine next steps.

We are not aware of any Resource Conservation and Recovery Act or Clean Air Act concerns at the construction site.

I appreciate you reaching out in the interest of protecting the unique environment of Cueva de las Golondrinas. EPA is committed to preserving our nation's water resources and ensuring compliance with all environmental laws and regulations. If you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to reach out to Anna Drabek, our Regional Congressional and Intergovernmental Liaison, at drabek.anna@epa.gov or 212-637-3586.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa F. Garcia', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lisa F. Garcia
Regional Administrator